

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-05 MCT-01 PM-05 NSC-05

SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 L-03

H-01 /072 W

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R 122133Z SEP 77

FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5299

INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 USUN 2979

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AR, PINT, SHUM, PINS

SUBJECT: PERONIST-MONTONERO MOVEMENT CONVERSATION WITH US  
CHURCH LEADER

1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF  
U.S. REPORTS TWO LONG, "INFORMAL, NON-OFFICIAL, PRIVATE"  
CONVERSATIONS, WITH KEY LEADERS OF MONTONERO PERONIST  
MOVEMENT (MRM). LEADERS CLAIM INTEREST IN OPENING  
DIALOGUE WITH USG, INSIST ON THEIR WILLINGNESS AND CAPACITY  
TO CEASE ARMED STRUGGLE ONCE FREE ELECTIONS AND OTHER  
CONDITIONS ARE MET AND PROFESS BELIEF IN MULTI-PARTY  
SYSTEM. END SUMMARY.

2. WILLIAM THOMPSON, STATED CLERK OF THE UNITED PRES-  
BYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE USA, AND PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL  
COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF THE U.S.A. , CONTACTED MISOFF  
(AN OLD FRIEND) AND MET WITH MISOFF ON SEPTEMBER 8  
AT FORMER'S REQUEST. HE INFORMED MISOFF OF HIS IMPRESSIONS  
AND SUMMARY OF TWO MEETINGS THAT HE HAD IN GENEVA ON AUGUST  
6 AND 7 OF THIS YEAR WITH THREE LEADERS OF THE MPM:  
JUAN GELMAN, FERNANDO VACA NARVAJA, AND OSCAR RAUL  
BIDEGAIN (OFFICIAL MPM BIO SKETCHES OF THREE CONTAINED  
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IN PAMPHLET POUCHED TO SCHIELE IOP SEPTEMBER 8:

"RESISTER C'EST VINCRE: MOUVEMENT PERONISTE MONTONERO.")

THOMPSON ASKED THAT , INsofar AS POSSIBLE, THE FACT OF  
THESE MEETINGS AND THE NAMES OF THE PARTICIPANTS

BE PROTECTED. ALSO PARTICIPATING IN THE MEETINGS, AND

THE KEY INTERMEDIARY, WAS THE REV. CHARLES HARPER,

(AMCIT, PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER) AN OFFICIAL OF THE WORLD

COUNCIL OF CHURCHES.

3. THERE THREE MEMBERS OF THE MPM ARE MEMBERS OF THE "SUPERIOR COMMAND" OF THAT PARTY, WHICH THEY CLAIM TO BE THE RESULT OF THE MERGER OF THE "AUTHENTIC PERONIST PARTY" AND THE MONTONEROS, AND WHOSE AIMS ARE SET FORTH IN THE PAMPHLET MENTIONED ABOVE, REFERRED TO AS THE "ROME DECLARATION". GELMAN AND BIDEgain ARE EXILES, AND EVIDENTLY NARVAJA LIVES MOST OF THE TIME CLANDESTINELY IN ARTENTINA. HE WAS INTRODUCED TO THOMPSON AS "SECOND IN COMMAND OF THE MONTONERO ARMY, AND SECRETARY FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF THE SUPREME COMMAND." THE THREE CLAIMED TO BE SPEAKING INFORMARLY WITHIN THE GUIDE-LINES OF THE SUPREME COMMAND.

4. THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE MEETING IT APPEARS FROM THOMPSON'S REPORT WAS TO PROBE FOR MORE CONTACTS WITH THE USG, TO OFFER MPM'S VIEW OF THE PROCESS OF TRAN-SITION TO DEOMCRATIC RULE AND TO SUGGEST POLICIES AND ACTIONS TO THE USG THAT COULD PROMOTE THIS PROCESS. THE MPM IS NOT, ACCORDING TO THE THREE A "CLASSIC GUERRILLA MOVEMENT", BUT RATHER A PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT THAT HAS RESORTED TO VIOLENCE ONLY AS A MEANS OF SELF-DEFENSE AND BECAUSE ALL OTHER MEANS OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY WERE BANNED. THE AIMS OF THE MPM ARE: TO GATHER TOGETHER ALL THE OPPOSITION TO MILITARY

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RULE IN ARGENTINA, TO WORK FOR THE "POLITICAL SOVEREIGNTY, ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE" OF ARGENTINA, AND THE PACIFICATION OF THE COUNTRY AND THE RETURN TO DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT. THE MPM LEADERS INSISTED REPEATEDLY TO THOMPSON THAT THEY FAVOR FREE ELECTIONS, THAT THEY RECOGNIZE THAT ALL POLITICAL PARTIES MUST BE FREE TO PARTICIPATE, AND THAT THEY ARE ONLY ONE (THOUGH THEY FEEL THEY ARE THE LARGEST) OF THE PARTIES. THEY TOLD THOMPSON THEY FEEL THAT THE YSG DOES NOT UNDERSTAND THEM THIS WAY, WHILE THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS--TO WHOM THEY EVIDENTLY FEEL CLOSE--DO. THEY INSISTED THAT "THERE IS NO MILITARY SOLUTION TO ARGENTINA'S PROBLEMS; FREE ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRACY ARE THE ONLY SOLUTIONS." THEY DENIED WANTING TO DESTROY THE ARGENTINE ARMY, BUT SAID THEY HAD TRIED SEVERAL TIMES, INCLUDING THROUGH THE GOOD OFFICES OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, TO DIALOGUE WITH THE ARMY, BUT HAD BEEN REBUFFED. IN SPITE OF THIS, THEY CLAIM THAT THERE ARE "MANY OFFICERS, ESPECIALLY JUNIOR OFFICERS" WHO DISAGREE WITH THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES, AND MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH THEM.

5. THEY CRITICIZED THE IMMEDIATE PREVIOUS US AMBASSADOR AND AMBASSADOR BRADEN AS FAVORING A POLICY OF PATIENCE WITH AUTHORITARIAN RULE, AND EXPRESSED THE BELIEF THAT PRESIDENT CARTER'S SPEECHES DURING THE CAMPAIGN AND SINCE THE ELECTION, AS WELL AS THE PLATFORM OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY, ALL SEEM TO THEM TO INDICATE A NEW POLICY. THE ESPECIALLY NOTED THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD CALLED FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF THE POEPL IN THE FOREIGN POLICY PROCESS, AND THAT DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN PLICY SHOULD BE RELATED. IF THIS WERE SO, THEY CLAIMED, THE USG COULD SPEED UP THE PROCESS OF RE-DEMOCRATIZING ARGENTINA. BUT THEY EXPRESSED DOUBT THAT THE "OLD POLICY" OF "GIVING MORE TIME TO THE JUNTA" WAS REALLY COMPLETELY REVERSED, AND EXPRESSED AN EAGERNESS TO BE A PART OF CONFIDENTIAL

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SOME DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING WHAT US POLICY TOWARDS ARGENTINA SHOULD BE.

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INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-05 MCT-01 PM-05 NSC-05  
SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 L-03  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 USUN 2979

6. WHEN THOMPSON ASKED WHAT SPECIFICALLY US SHOULD O, THEY REPLIED THAT US SHOULD MOVE TOWARDS ECONOMIC SANCTIONS AS WELL AS CUT-OFFS OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE. THEY ALSO SAID THAT US NEEDS A CONSISTENT POLICY TOWARDS ALL DICTATORS, AND MENTIONED THAT THE US WAS MORE FOCUSSED ON CHILE, IN THEIR OPINION, THAN

ON ARGENTINA.

7. WHEN THOMPSON ASKED IF THEY WOULD CEASE GUERRILLA ACTIVITY IF THEIR CONDITIONS (SPELLED OUT IN THE AMPHLET ) WERE MET, THEY RESPONDED, YES. WHEN ASKED IF THEY WERE ABLE TO ENFORCE THIS, THEY SAID YES, BUT THEY COULD NOT SPEAK FOR THE ERP, WITH WHOM THEY DO NOT YET HAVE "A TOTAL POLITICAL AGREEMENT." THEY ALSO SAID THEY DOUBTED THAT THE PRESENT MEMBERS OF THE JUNTA WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE, AND THEY WOULD HAVE TO BE REPLACED BY THE MILITARY WITH OTHER MILITARY LEADERS BEFORE DIALOGUES COULD GET VERY FAR.

8. AS AN IMPORTANT ITEM THEY SUGGESTED THAT THE US SHOULD INCREASE PUBLIC PRESSURE FOR THE RELEASE OF FORMER PRESIDENT CAMPORA, WHICH THEY BELIEVE WOULD BE A GREAT STEP FORWARD TO CREATING A CLIMATE IN WHICH SOME SORT CONFIDENTIAL

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OF CIVILIAN-DOMINATED TRANSITION PROCESS COULD PROCEED.

9. THE THREE MPM LEADERS EMPHASIZED THAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO CONTACT WITH RESPONSIBLE USG OFFICIALS," ANY PLACE IN THE WORLD, ANY TIME," AND SAID THEY WOULD COME TO THE US IF INVITED." THEY WOULD LIKE THE FIRST MEETINGS TO BE RELATIVELY SECRET, THEY SAID.

10. THOMPSON OFFERED THE OPINION THAT THE THREE WERE SINCERE AND DEVOTED TO THEIR CAUSE. MAYBE THEY EXAGGERATE SOME TIME THEIR PARTY'S STRENGTH AND UNITY, BUT I WAS IMPRESSED WITH THEM AS MEN AND AS LEADERS". THOMPSON VOLUNTEERED TO MEET FOR A LONGER BRIEFING ON THESE CONVERSATIONS WITH OFFICIALS IN THE DEPARTMENT AT A MUTUALLY CONVENIENT TIME, IF THERE IS INTEREST. (HE TRAVELS FREQUENTLY TO WASHINGTON.)

11. COMMENT: CHARLES HARPER IN GENEVA IS PROBABLY MUCH MORE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT ARGENTINE AFFAIRS, AND MUCH CLOSER TO THE MPM, IF FURTHER CONTACTS WITH MPM ARE DESIRED. HE IS CLOSE TO THOMPSON. END COMMENT.  
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## Message Attributes

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Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009